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## **VIRGINIA WORKPLACE FATALITIES SHOW INCREASE IN 2004**

**RICHMOND** – The Virginia Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) showed 171 occupational fatalities in the Commonwealth in 2004, up by 10 percent from the 155 fatalities in 2003. (See Chart 2.) The increase was due to two catastrophic events in Virginia in 2004, a ship explosion that killed 21 workers and a plane crash that killed 9 employees.

Transportation accidents (84), which includes highway, nonhighway, pedestrian, air, water, and rail fatalities, increased by 27 from 2003, made up nearly half of all work-related deaths and continued to be the leading cause of workplace fatalities. Falls, mainly falls to lower level, accounted for 27 deaths, increased by 3, and were the highest since the series began in 1992. Assaults and violent acts, which include homicides and suicides, had 17 fatalities and decreased by 7 from 2003, primarily due to a decrease of shootings in the workplace. (See Chart 1.) Overall, workplace deaths due to assaults and violent acts were down 59 percent from the high of 41 recorded in 1998 (excluding the 165 work-related deaths resulting from the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001).

Construction (42) had the most deaths of any industry sector in the census accounting for one-fourth of the fatalities; 12 of the fatalities occurred at residential construction sites, 10 were at industrial construction sites, 8 were on a street or highway, and 3 were at road construction sites. The transportation and warehousing industry sector was the industry that showed the

largest growth in 2004, increasing by 17 from 2003, and had 35 fatalities. The rise was due to the single catastrophic ship explosion that had 21 cases classified in the water transportation industry. Government decreased the most by 9 and made up 12 occupational fatalities.

The top two specific occupations with the largest number of workplace fatalities in 2004 were **sailors and marine oilers (20)**, all were water vehicle accidents; and **truck drivers, heavy and tractor trailer (18)**, 15 were highway accidents; which together accounted for 22 percent of the total fatalities. Of the next top specific occupations with the most deaths, **carpenters (7)**, 5 were due to falls to lower level; **farmers and ranchers (5)**, 3 were transportation accidents; **construction laborers (5)**, 3 were due to falls to lower level; **roofers (5)**, 3 were due to falls from roof; and **industrial machinery mechanics (5)**, which combined made up 16 percent of the total fatalities.

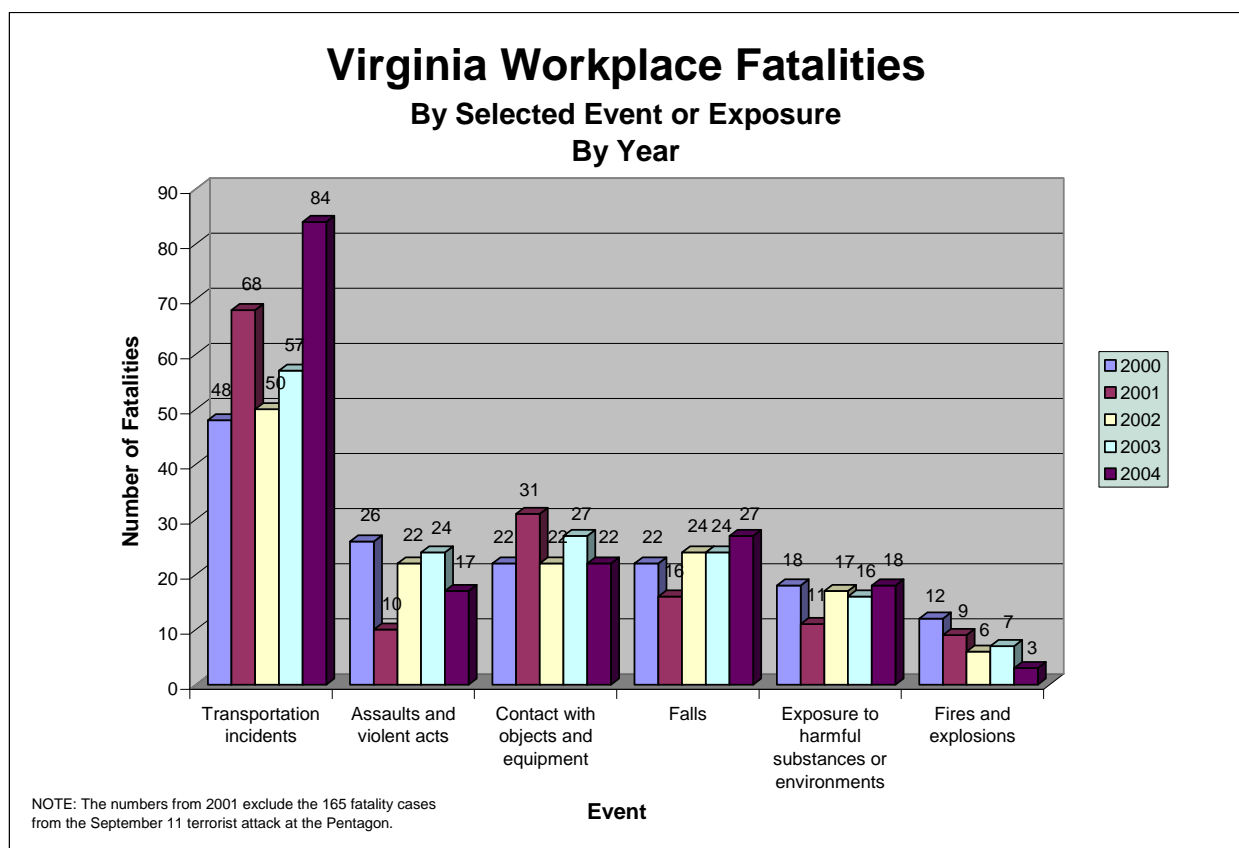


Chart 1

“We are saddened by the number of lives lost from the two catastrophic events of last year as well as the loss of other employees who died in work-related accidents in Virginia,” said Labor and Industry Commissioner C. Ray Davenport. “This detailed count of workplace fatalities increases public awareness and helps pinpoint where safety and health problems exist, and efforts to address hazards can be put in place to prevent future job-related fatalities.”

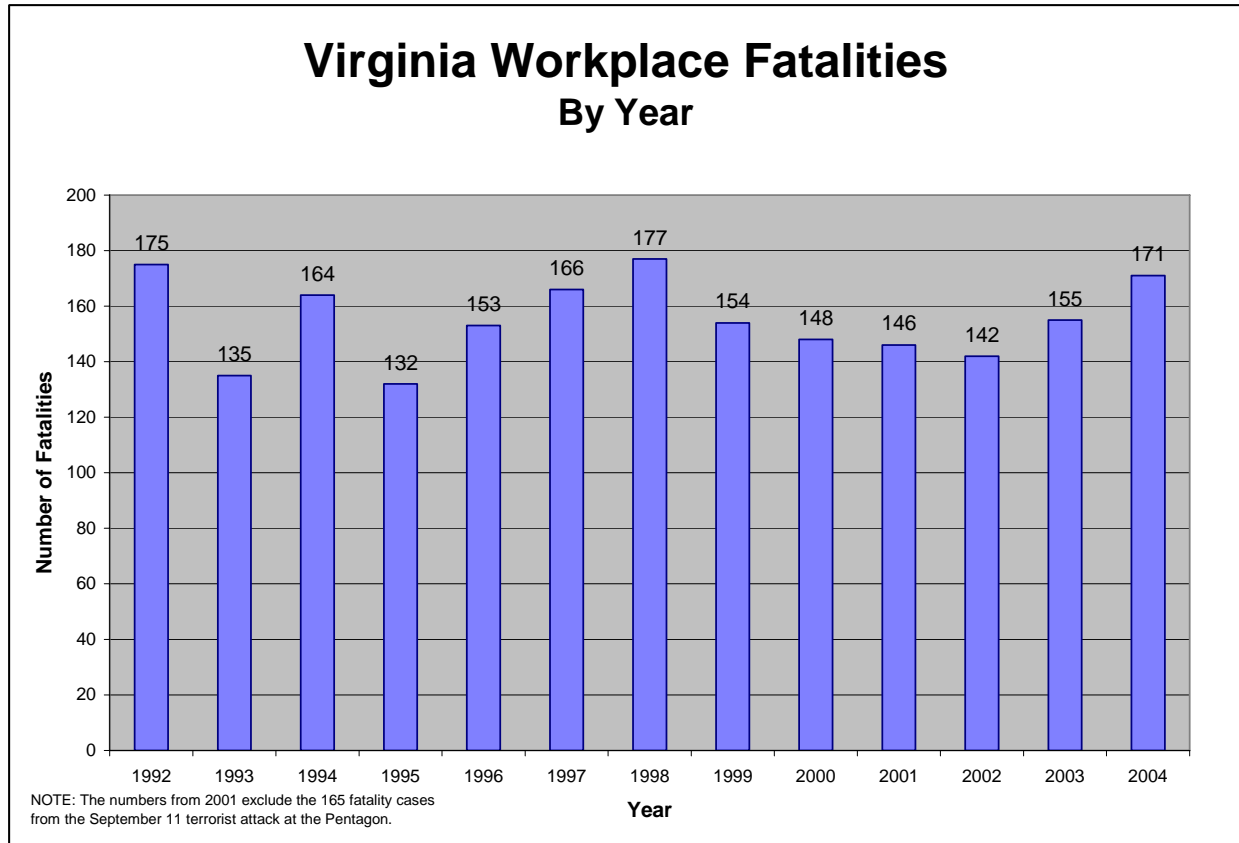


Chart 2

### **Nationwide**

A total of 5,703 fatal work injuries were recorded in the United States in 2004, an increase of 2 percent from the revised total of 5,575 fatal work injuries reported for 2003. Despite the increase, the total for 2004 was the third lowest annual total recorded by the fatality census, which has been conducted each year since 1992. Additional information on the national census of fatal occupational injuries can be found by accessing the following web link: <http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshcfoi1.htm>.

### **Additional Statewide Information**

Detailed statistical tables on the Virginia Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) will be posted in the near future at our agency website: <http://www.doli.virginia.gov>. Click on DOLI Programs and then Research and Analysis to find our web page. Also, information can be requested by contacting our department at (804) 786-1035 or by sending an email to [Dwight.Crews@doli.virginia.gov](mailto:Dwight.Crews@doli.virginia.gov).

## **Technical Notes**

The Virginia Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries was conducted by the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Information on fatal occupational injuries was compiled from a variety of administrative sources including death certificates, motor vehicle traffic accident reports, medical examiner's reports, state workers' compensation reports, newspaper articles, state and federal OSHA reports, and other government investigative reports. Each fatality for the census was substantiated by at least two independent source documents.

The CFOI program is designed to provide the safety and health community with verified counts of fatal work injuries and basic information on fatalities such as how the injury occurred, the type of industry that was involved, as well as, the occupation and demographic data of the employee. It is hoped that the availability of this detailed data will be used to help prevent future fatalities in the workplace.

While the purpose of the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries is to compile a complete count of traumatic workplace fatalities, information was also collected on fatal occupational illnesses that were recognized as work related or that occurred at work. A comprehensive count of fatalities resulting from occupational illnesses cannot be produced from current data largely because of the latency period associated with many occupational illnesses, as well as the difficulty in linking illnesses with exposures in the workplace. Therefore, fatal occupational illnesses are not reported in this census and are excluded from the data.

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